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DIRECTORATE OF
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Imagery Analysis Service Notes

31 January 1969

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This publication highlights significant or timely intelligence items derived from photography.

The interpretations in this publication represent preliminary views which are subject to modification in the light of further information and more complete analysis.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
Imagery Analysis Service

IMAGERY ANALYSIS SERVICE NOTES NO. 3/69

CONTENTS

Page

NORTH VIETNAM/LAOS

Extension of POL Pipeline and Initial Observation
of Its Use 2

CHINA

Narrow Gauge Rail Line Construction in the North
China Plain. 6

Improved Chinese Fertilizer Plant Design and
Production Technology. 7



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NORTH VIETNAM/LAOS

Extension of POL Pipeline and Initial Observation of Its Use

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As of late [] photographic evidence shows that North Vietnam's pipeline system is probably being extended into neighboring Laos.* Within North Vietnam the pipeline now extends as far south as Bai Duc Thon, a total of at least 68 nautical miles (nm), and pipeline construction is in progress at two areas farther south toward Mu Gia Pass (see Figure 1). One of these areas is located 7nm south of Bai Duc Thon, a major logistics and convoy staging area for infiltration movement toward Laos and South Vietnam. The second area of construction is noted 5 nm from the North Vietnam-Laos border at 17-45N 105-47E.

Across the border in Laos, construction activity consisting of an open trench and possible pipeline traces is observed in the vicinity of 17-30N 105-40E, approximately 11 nm south of the Mu Gia Pass. The open trench (17-26N 105-39E) is at least 2 nm long and resembles the type associated with pipeline construction in the North Vietnamese panhandle. The possible pipeline tracings are observed intermittently in the area of 17-32N 105-43E and extend a distance of 3 nm.

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At least part of the pipeline system was operational in mid-[] A lack of interpretable photography over the east-west pipeline between Vinh and the north-south portion precludes an update on its status. However, late [] photography shows waterborne POL carriers pumping POL either into the storage tanks at the Vinh Petroleum Products Storage Facility (PPS) or directly into the pipeline. POL probably enters the pipeline system from waterborne carriers at Vinh, rather than at the northern terminus of the system which can be served only by truck. Photography since [] indicates that this northern terminus has been inactive. On mid-

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[] photography, POL trucks were observed in a refueling operation at Lang Luyen PPS, the former southern terminus of the pipeline (see Figure 2).

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*Imagery Analysis Notes, 27 December 1968

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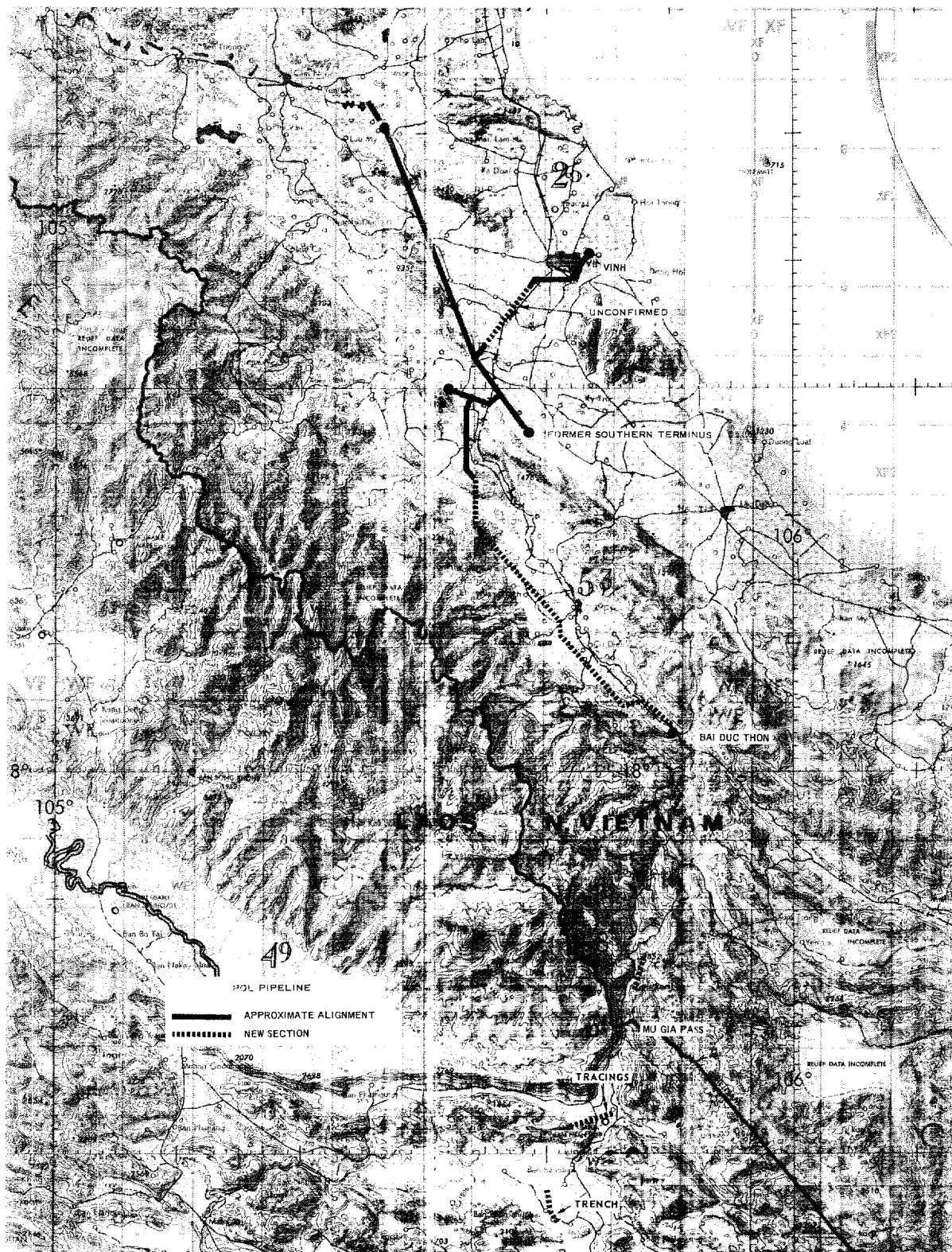


FIGURE 1. STATUS OF POL PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION IN NORTH VIETNAM-LAOS.

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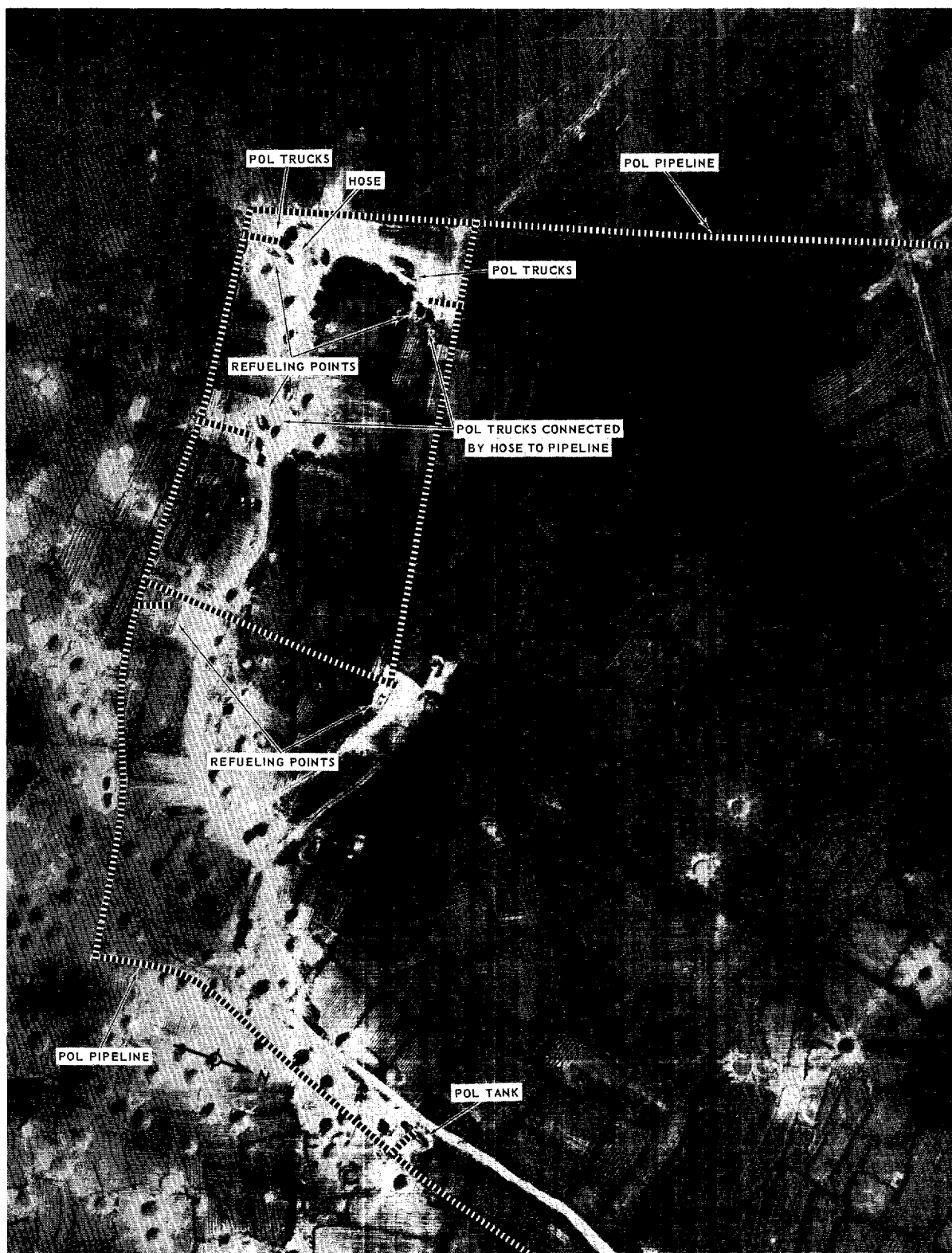
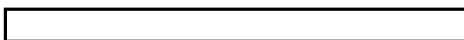


FIGURE 2. LANG LUYEN PETROLEUM PRODUCTS STORAGE FACILITY, NORTH VIETNAM,



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-4-

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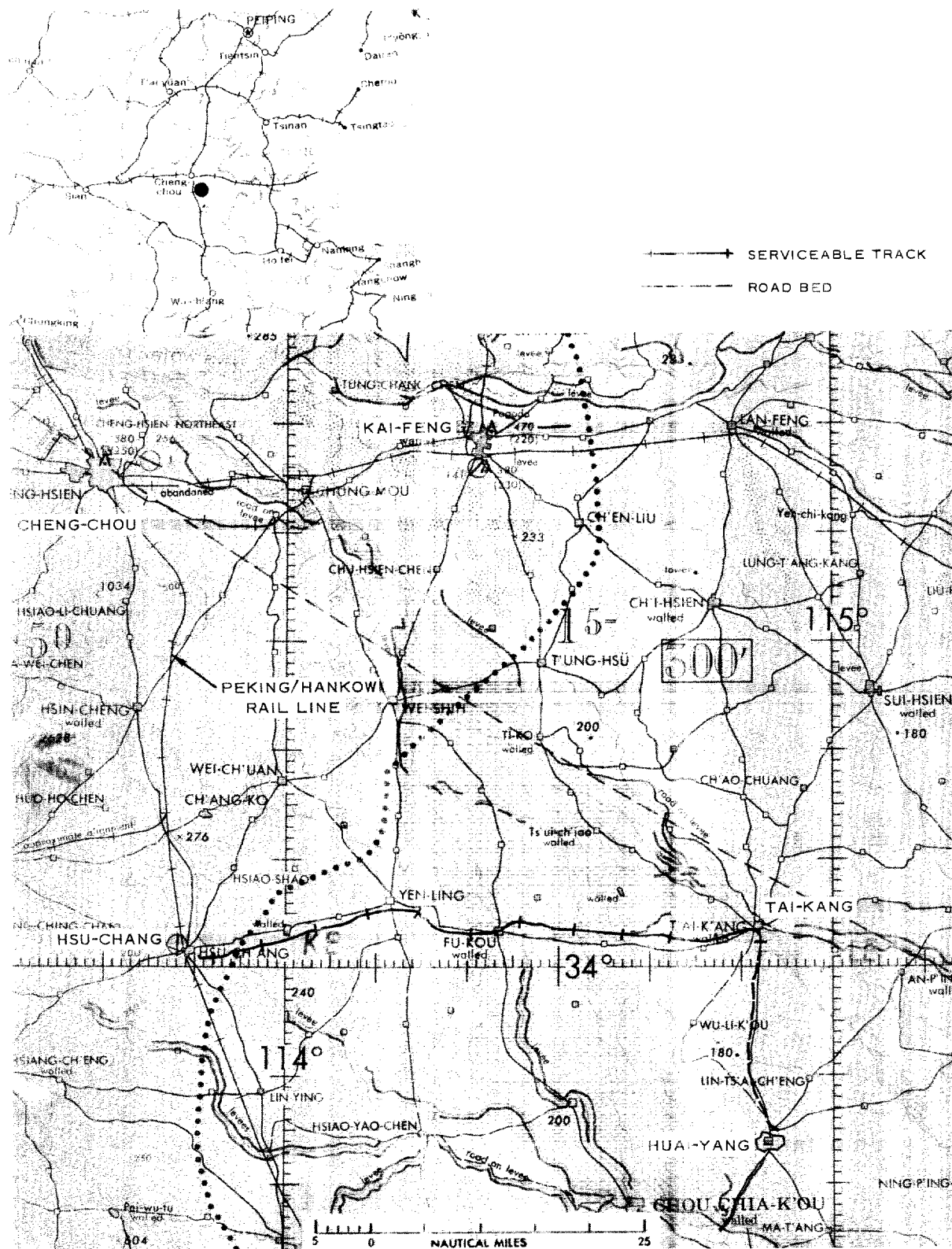


FIGURE 3. NARROW GAUGE RAIL LINE CONSTRUCTION, HONAN PROVINCE, CHINA, [REDACTED]

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CHINA

Narrow Gauge Rail Line Construction in the North China Plain

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A major narrow gauge rail line has been identified under construction in the wheat and tobacco-rich plains of Honan Province. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] KEYHOLE photography [REDACTED] shows 55 nautical miles (nm) of serviceable narrow gauge track extending from a rail transloading facility at Hsu-chang, on the standard gauge Peking to Hankow Rail Line, eastward to Tai-kang. A 20 nm segment from Tai-kang south to Huai-yang is still under construction. (See Figure 3.) A review of earlier photography reveals initial roadbed scarring as early as [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It is not possible at this time to determine the planned extent of the rail line.

Although there are several older, narrow gauge, branch rail lines serving agricultural areas in the North China Plain, this is the first narrow gauge line of this type to be observed under construction in recent years. With the exception of narrow gauge forestry lines in Northeast China, branch rail lines and spurs have been constructed using the national standard gauge. Despite the costs of transloading and the need for separate narrow gauge rolling stock and maintenance facilities, there are probably net economic advantages in building a narrow gauge rail line in this particular situation.

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CHINA

Improved Chinese Fertilizer Plant Design and Technology

Photographic analysis of a representative group of large fertilizer plants in China shows that, since the withdrawal of Soviet aid in the early 1960's, the Chinese have improved both plant design and production technology in this industry. A gradual evolution from Soviet to Chinese plant design is evident in six plants begun prior to [] but not completed until after []. These plants are substantially more compact in layout than those completed with Soviet help.

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Evidence of improved Chinese technology has been noted in the nitric acid, urea, and phosphate fertilizer industries. At the Liu-chou and Kai-feng fertilizer plants, absorbers for nitric acid production were installed in [] which are smaller and fewer in number than those at older plants, but apparently more efficient. Two urea plants, and possibly a third, of Chinese design were built in [] whereas it was previously believed that China had no urea production capability. Also in [] a unique new mixing and blending building was constructed at one of the urea plants and at two other plants. Through use of a hopper system, these buildings can apparently blend various mixtures of urea, ammonium sulfate, and ammonium nitrate.

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It also appears that the Chinese are now capable of producing higher quality phosphate fertilizers. Possible phosphoric acid production facilities were constructed at Chan-chiang in []. Such facilities produce triple superphosphate with a very high phosphate content. In addition, there is evidence that since [] the phosphate fertilizer plant in Tai-yuan has been treating superphosphate with ammonia.

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